



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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August 19, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM:

Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **KINSHIP CENTER FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW –
A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Kinship Center Foster Family Agency (Kinship Center or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with Kinship Center, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Kinship Center is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. The Agency oversees a total of 16 certified foster homes in which 23 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Kinship Center is located in Orange County.

DCFS pays Kinship Center a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on the child's age, Kinship Center receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents between \$624

and \$790 per month, per child. DCFS paid Kinship Center approximately \$383,000 during Fiscal Year 2008-09.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Kinship Center was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed Kinship Center staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several children and foster parents.

Results of Review

The three foster homes we visited were well maintained and in compliance with CDSS Title 22 safety regulations. The foster parents indicated that the services they received from Kinship Center met their expectations and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, the Agency social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Kinship Center needs to ensure that children's case files and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. We specifically noted the following:

- None (100%) of the four children taking psychotropic medications had current court authorizations for the administration of the medication. Subsequent to our review, the Agency obtained the four court authorizations.
- Two (66%) of the three NSPs reviewed contained goals that were not specific and time limited as required.
- One (33%) of the three NSPs reviewed did not contain the Agency's recommendation regarding the feasibility of the children's return to home, placement in another facility, or a move to independent living.

The details of our review along with recommendations for corrective action are attached.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with Kinship Center on June 19, 2009. In their response (Attachment I), Kinship Center management indicates the actions they have taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review. In their response (Attachment II), DCFS indicates they will follow up on our recommendations during their next monitoring review tentatively scheduled for December 2009.

We thank Kinship Center for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Geoffrey Le Plastrier, Chair, Board of Directors, Kinship Center FFA
Carol Biddle, President & CEO, Kinship Center FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
KINSHIP CENTER FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2008-09**

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Kinship Center Foster Family Agency (Kinship Center or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited three of the 16 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Kinship Center billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in November and December 2008, and interviewed four foster parents and two children placed in the three homes. We also observed a toddler who was too young to interview. In addition, we reviewed the case files for five foster parents and three children and we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

All three homes we visited were well maintained and in compliance with CDSS Title 22 safety regulations. Kinship Center ensured that their social workers visited the children the required number of times.

Kinship Center needs to ensure that they maintain current court authorizations for the children taking psychotropic medication and that Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) contain all the required information. We specifically noted the following:

Medical Services

- None (100%) of the four children taking psychotropic medications had current court authorizations for the administration of the medication. Subsequent to our review, the Agency obtained required court authorizations.

Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports

- Two (67%) of the three NSPs reviewed contained goals that were not specific and time limited as required.
- One (33%) of the three NSPs reviewed did not contain the Agency's recommendation regarding the feasibility of the children's return to home, placement in another facility, or a move to independent living.

Recommendations

Kinship Center management ensure:

- 1. Children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication.**
- 2. NSPs contain all the required information including goals that are specific and time limited.**
- 3. NSPs contain the Agency's recommendation regarding the feasibility of the child's return to home, placement in another facility, or a move to independent living.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION**Objective**

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Kinship Center billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed three children placed in three Kinship Center certified foster homes and four foster parents to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS. We also observed one toddler who was too young to interview.

Results

The foster children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations and that they appreciated the help they received from the Agency's social workers. In addition, the toddler that we observed seemed well cared for and happy.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**Objective**

Determine whether Kinship Center social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed Kinship Center's administrator and supervising social worker and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

Kinship Center's six social workers carried an average caseload of four cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised six social workers.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether Kinship Center staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

We interviewed Kinship Center's administrator and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

Kinship Center's supervising social worker and social workers possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, Kinship Center conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

Recommendation

None.

KINSHIP CENTER®

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DATE: June 24, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, 4th District, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina, 1st District
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, 2nd District
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, 3rd District
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, 5th District

FROM: Melissa J. Dodson, Director of Foster Care and Adoptions
KINSHIP CENTER

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO KINSHIP CENTER CONTRACT REVIEW – A
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER
FAMILY AGENCY SERVICE PROVIDER**

Dear Supervisors:

We would like to thank the Auditor-Controller's office for their professional manner and responsive approach during the comprehensive review of our Foster Family Agency. Ms. Maricela Morfin was professional, knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. Kinship Center is proud to serve the community of Los Angeles by providing foster and adoptive families for the children of Los Angeles and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Los Angeles County. Kinship Center is committed to providing the best possible services to our children and families.

The following addresses the three recommendations listed in the Foster Family Agency Contract Review Report:

Kinship Center Management ensures:

- 1) Children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization for the administration of medication:

Kinship has implemented a system for periodic review of cases where children are prescribed psychotropic medication. A master calendar has been developed so supervisors and social workers can be made aware well in advance for obtaining the necessary orders for compliance. A training meeting with Direct Services staff was held on February 12, 2009 reviewing procedures for compliance.

■ SUPPORTING THE CREATION AND PRESERVATION OF FOSTER, ADOPTIVE AND RELATED FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN WHO NEED THEM

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- 2) Needs and Service plans contain all required information including goals that are specific and time-limited:

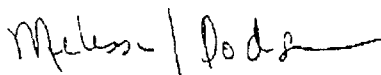
Training was held for social workers at our February 12, 2009 Adoption Staff meeting concerning the input that was given us regarding the wording of goals and timelines. Ongoing review of needs and service plan and goals continue by supervisors and management.

- 3) Needs and Service plans contain the Agency's recommendation regarding feasibility of the child's return home, placement in another facility or approve to independent living:

Training was held for social workers on February 12, 2009 concerning the implementation of recommendations regarding the Agency's recommendations for permanency planning options. Review of needs and service plans by supervisors and management is ongoing.

Kinship Center is available to discuss the above mentioned corrective plan of action. We welcome any further questions or comments that will allow us to continue to effectively serve Los Angeles County's children.

Sincerely,



Melissa J. Dodson, MSW
Program Director

cc: Brian Henricks, Auditor-Controller/Contract Monitoring Division
Carol Biddle, President/CEO, Kinship Center



PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director


**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
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Fifth District

July 15, 2009

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM:  Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head
Out of Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF KINSHIP
CENTER FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) has reviewed the Auditor-Controller's (A-C) June 24, 2009 final draft report of the contract compliance review of Kinship Center FFA. Although, the report notes several programmatic issues, there were no safety issues which required an immediate response from DCFS.

We will conduct a follow-up review based on the A-C's recommendations, which is tentatively scheduled for December 2009.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

MG:EAH:NF

c: Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Patricia Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS
Marilynne Garrison, Division Chief, DCFS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"